Primary Palliative Care Education - Curriculum Overview for Learners

What is Primary Palliative Care?

- While some seriously ill patients and their families require *specialty* palliative care services, all patients can benefit from the application of palliative care principles by the medical professionals who care for them in all settings. A chaplain, physician, nurse, social worker, and other medical professional without specialist training who focuses on improving quality of life for patients with serious illness and their families is providing *primary* palliative care.

What does this course teach?

- This course teaches the palliative care principles, knowledge, and skills that are core to improving the quality of life of seriously ill patients and their families. In this course, through the lens of interprofessional whole person care, you will learn:
    - What palliative care is and how it relates to hospice
    - A framework to appreciate and screen for needs across all the dimensions of patient and family experience in serious illness – Medical, Psychological, Social, and Spiritual
    - Principles and practices of effective serious illness communication, including exploring goals of care and advance care planning
    - A multidimensional approach to assessing and managing pain and other symptoms in serious illness
    - How to support patients and families at the end of life

The curriculum consists of nine 55-min free-standing modules taught by an interprofessional team (i.e. MD/RN, RN/chaplain, MD/SW etc). The modules are intended for an interprofessional audience and are very interactive including case discussion, group activities and reflection. The module are:

1. Introduction to Palliative Care
2. Psychosocial Care
3. Spiritual and Cultural Care
4. Serious Illness Communication (Part I)
5. Serious Illness Communication (Part II)
6. Pain Management
7. Symptom Management
8. Advance Care Planning
9. Care Near the End of Life

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How is this course different from other primary palliative care courses?

- With support from a grant by the Stupski Foundation and drawing on the latest educational and medical literature, this course was developed from the ground up by a highly experienced group of educators representing each of the four core palliative care professions: social worker, nurse, physician, and chaplain. This rigorous interdisciplinary approach ensures that the latest science and best practice is informed by the emphasis on whole-person care that characterizes palliative care.

Who might benefit from this course?

- Physicians, social workers, chaplains, nurses, and other medical professionals who work with seriously ill patients or their families and are seeking to gain or enhance foundational palliative care knowledge and skills caring for these patients
- No prior training in palliative care is required

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